

Dave and Tricia Juvet, a professional couple - lack of housing choices



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"It just seemed curious to me," comments Dave Juvet, 43, vice president of the New Hampshire Business and Industry Association, (BIA) "that almost anywhere you go in cities in New England, they don't have downtown housing for moderate to upper-middle incomes." But that is the type of housing that Juvet and his wife, a professional couple with no children, would prefer. He finds New Hampshire towns and cities severely lacking in "all sorts of choices in housing." For Juvet, lack of housing choices is both a personal and professional issue. "The BIA thinks workforce housing is an important issue for the state," notes Juvet who works on tax policy and economic development issues for the BIA.

Juvet liked the garden-home communities he found in Scottsdale, Arizona, with 100-200 dwellings around common areas. "Not everyone wants to get into mowing lawns and doing yard work," observes Juvet. Many young families, professional couples, and older people might prefer alternatives to the large-lot, single-family home, he argues. "There is a segment that wants a more 'rural' lifestyle," Juvet comments, "and that's fine. What bothers me is the lack of choice for others." The Juvets gave up and bought a house with a lawn in Merrimack, a 45-minute commute from both his and his wife's offices in Concord. "It's very stressful," he says of their commute, "and it also has environmental impacts."

Lack of housing choices not only thwarts families from achieving their goals, it also stymies the master plan goals of towns and cities. "I love vibrant downtowns," Juvet says. "But you can't have vibrant downtowns unless you have people living there!"